



Fundamental Pillars

The Sanctuary part 1

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A Christmas Litany

Within the veil: where did Christ go?

Some have felt that Hebrews 6:19, 20 destroys the understanding Adventists have had regarding the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary and His special work of judgment beginning in 1844. Where did Jesus go at His ascension and why? Is Ellen White at variance with Scripture on this point?

□ by Erwin R. Gane

Ellen White herself predicted that as the end drew near there would be a concerted attempt to discredit her writings as communications from God (see *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 48). Part of the current effort to weaken and discredit her prophetic ministry is the criticism of her interpretations of Scripture. Some are arguing

that she was an inspired pastoral counselor, but not a Bible expositor. Refusing to be limited by Ellen White's understandings of scriptural passages, some reserve the right to reject a Spirit of Prophecy interpretation that they feel is in conflict with Bible teaching. After all, they argue, the Spirit of God is quite capable of explaining Scripture to them personally as they bring to bear upon it the scholarly tools that they have assembled.

None of us would deny that the Holy Spirit guides "into all truth" (John 16:13). Nor would anyone wish to stifle the individual effort to grasp the meaning of Scripture. Yet if Ellen White was indeed inspired of God, it should be relatively obvious that the same Holy Spirit who revealed truth to her in visions and dreams is not at all likely to provide contradictory interpretations for the present-day student of Scripture. In

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the light of her claims it is just not possible to argue that she was both inspired and Scripturally unsound. What were her claims in this respect? "The testimonies God has given His people are in harmony with His word."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 402.

Ellen White does not claim that every time she quotes a Bible verse, or a part thereof, she intends to provide a strict contextual application of the passage. But she does claim that the teaching of her writings is thoroughly consistent with that of Scripture. What attitude do we adopt, then, if we discover that our interpretation of a Scripture passage contradicts Ellen White's?

One option is to realize that even though our interpretation of a passage may be correct, Ellen White's different interpretation may also be correct. Some passages of Scripture are subject to more than a single application. A classic example is Hebrews 6:19, 20: "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which

enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (N.A.S.B.).*

The phrase "within the veil" is the key element. Does it refer to the veil that separated the court from the holy place, or the "second veil" (Heb. 9:3), which hung between the holy place and Most Holy Place of the sanctuary? The question, as usually asked, seeks to determine whether Christ began His holy place, or His Most Holy Place, ministry after His ascension in A.D. 31. Some have felt this passage destroys the understanding Seventh-day Adventists have had regarding the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary and the concept of a special work of judgment beginning in 1844. Let's look first at the passage Biblically and then examine Ellen White's use of it.

The message of Hebrews, chapters 6-10, is that Christ's death and resurrection rendered the earthly sanctuary and ministry obsolete, replacing it by His

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In Hebrews 6:19, 20 “within the veil” is stated to have a “dual application.” (Erwin Gane, *Ministry*, December 1983)

In the earthly sanctuary, both the daily service and the annual Day of Atonement ritual provided forgiveness or cleansing from sin for confessing sinners. (Erwin Gane, *Ministry*, December 1983)

Christ surely went into the Most Holy Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary at His ascension in A.D. 31 and was still occupying that position years later when the book of Hebrews was written. (Erwin Gane, *Ministry*, December 1983)

Daniel 7:13 (KJV) — 13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

Is there any indication in Ellen White's writings that Christ entered the Most Holy Place in heaven in A.D. 31 at His ascension? Yes. (Erwin Gane, *Ministry*, December 1983)

Ellen White even suggests that there is no veil between the two apartments in heaven. (Erwin Gane, *Ministry*, December 1983)

In her overall teaching Ellen White, like Scripture, depicts a literal heavenly sanctuary, but one in which no veil hangs between the two apartments. The throne in the Most Holy Place is occupied by both Father and Son, from Christ's ascension to the end of time. (Erwin Gane, *Ministry*, December 1983)

Did Ellen White believe this?

The rending of the veil of the temple showed that the Jewish sacrifices and ordinances would no longer be received. The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement. But the Jews were left in total darkness. They lost all the light which they might have had upon the plan of salvation, and still trusted in their useless sacrifices and offerings. The heavenly sanctuary had taken the place of the earthly, yet they had no knowledge of the change. Therefore they could not be benefited by the mediation of Christ in the holy place. (*The Story of Redemption*, p. 386.2)

As Christ at His ascension appeared in the presence of God to plead His blood in behalf of penitent believers, so the priest in the daily ministration sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice in the holy place in the sinner's behalf.

(Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 357.4)

The holy places of the sanctuary in heaven are represented by the two apartments in the sanctuary on earth. As in vision the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne.” Revelation 4:5. He saw an angel “having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.”

Revelation 8:3. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 414.3a)

Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven; and he saw there the “seven lamps of fire” and “the golden altar,” represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth. Again, “the temple of God was opened” (Revelation 11:19), and he looked **within the inner veil**, upon the holy of holies. Here he beheld “the ark of His testament,” represented by the sacred chest constructed by Moses to contain the law of God. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 414.3b)

**Ellen White Footnotes on the
importance of the sanctuary doctrine.**

The correct understanding of the ministration
in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of
our faith. (MR760 p. 27.5)

But such subjects as the sanctuary, in connection with the 2300 days, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, are perfectly calculated to explain the past Advent movement and show what our present position is, establish the faith of the doubting, and give certainty to the glorious future. These, I have frequently seen, were the principal subjects on which the messengers should dwell. (*Early Writings*, p. 63.2)

The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

Daniel 8:14. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 409.1)

The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, "whither the forerunner is for us entered." Hebrews 6:20. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 489.1a)

There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption. The salvation of man is accomplished at an infinite expense to heaven; the sacrifice made is equal to the broadest demands of the broken law of God. Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, and through His mediation the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 489.1b)

What does the Bible say?

Exodus 25:8 (KJV) — 8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

dwell = שָׁכַן (*shaken*) to dwell, settle down, abode, habitation.

Genesis 3:24 (KJV) — 24 So he drove out the man;
and he placed (שָׁרָף shaken) at the east of the garden of
Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned
every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Isaiah 59:2 (KJV) — 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

**Deuteronomy 4:24 (KJV) — 24 For the LORD thy
God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. (See also
9:3; Isaiah 33:14; Hebrews 12:29)**

Ellen White does not provide specific measurements for the size of the earthly sanctuary in her writings.

However, she describes its significance and the furniture within it, emphasizing its role as a representation of the heavenly sanctuary. (AI)

The tabernacle was so constructed that it could be taken apart and borne with the Israelites in all their journeyings. It was therefore small, being not more than fifty-five feet in length, and eighteen in breadth and height. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 347.1)

Note: These measurements can only be arrived at by using the royal cubit or cubit of the sanctuary (Ezekiel 40:5; 43:13; 47:3).

INSIDE THE TEMPLE

(Cutaway view)

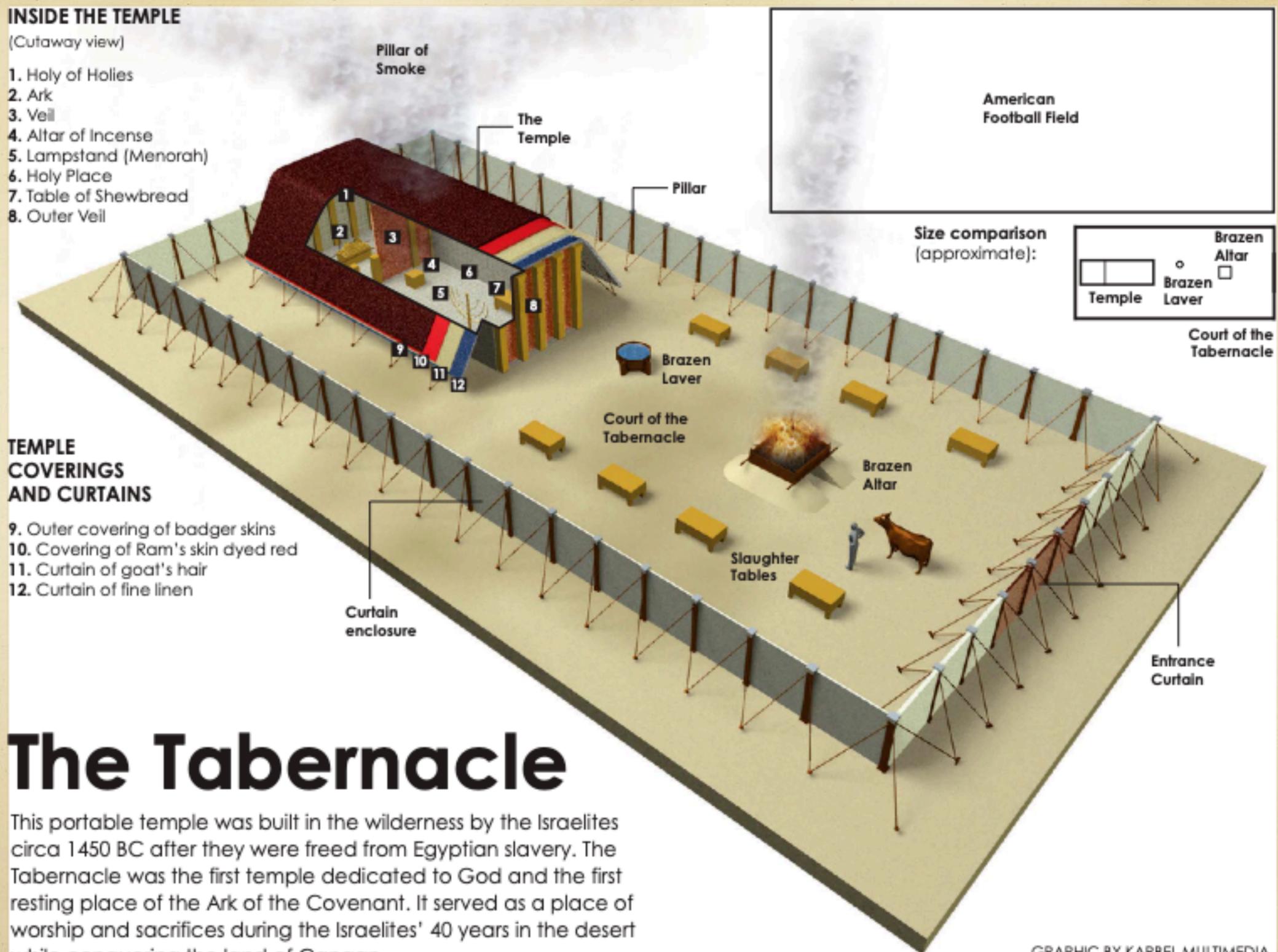
1. Holy of Holies
2. Ark
3. Veil
4. Altar of Incense
5. Lampstand (Menorah)
6. Holy Place
7. Table of Shewbread
8. Outer Veil

TEMPLE COVERINGS AND CURTAINS

9. Outer covering of badger skins
10. Covering of Ram's skin dyed red
11. Curtain of goat's hair
12. Curtain of fine linen

The Tabernacle

This portable temple was built in the wilderness by the Israelites circa 1450 BC after they were freed from Egyptian slavery. The Tabernacle was the first temple dedicated to God and the first resting place of the Ark of the Covenant. It served as a place of worship and sacrifices during the Israelites' 40 years in the desert while conquering the land of Canaan.



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John 14:1-3 (KJV) — 1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Psalm 77:13 (KJV) — 13 Thy way, O God, is in the
sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?

Exodus 25:9 (KJV) — 9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

Exodus 25:40 (KJV) — 40 And look that thou
make them after their pattern, which was shewed
thee in the mount.

Hebrews 9:1 (KJV) — 1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

Revelation 11:19 (KJV) — 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Revelation 3:12 (KJV) — 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Hebrews 8:1–3 (KJV) — 1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. 3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

Hebrews 8:4–5 (KJV) —4 For if he were on earth,
he should not be a priest, seeing that there are
priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who
serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly
things, as Moses was admonished of God when he
was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith
he, that thou make all things according to the
pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

Hebrews 9:24 (KJV) — 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Exodus 25:16 (KJV) — 16 And thou shalt put into
the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.

Exodus 31:18 (KJV) — 18 And he gave unto
Moses, when he had made an end of
communing with him upon mount Sinai, two
tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with
the finger of God.

Revelation 11:19 (KJV) — 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Hebrews 9:22 (KJV) — 22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

**1 Corinthians 5:7 (KJV) — 7 Purge out
therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new
lump, as ye are unleavened. For even **Christ our
passover** is sacrificed for us:**

John 1:29 (KJV) — 29 The next day John seeth
Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb
of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John 18:28 (KJV) — 28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

John 19:14 (KJV) — 14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

So these high priests, upon the coming of their feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour till the eleventh, . . .

(The Works of Josephus, Updated Edition p. 749)

Mark 15:34-37 (KJV) — 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. 36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down. 37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

John 19:33 (KJV) — 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

John 19:36 (KJV) — 36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

Exodus 12:46 (KJV) — 46 In one house shall it
[the Passover lamb] be eaten; thou shalt not carry
forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house;
neither shall ye break a bone thereof.

Exodus 12:21–22 (KJV) — 21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover [lamb]. 22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

Colossians 1:20 (KJV) — 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Hebrews 10:4 (KJV) — 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

1 Peter 1:18–19 (KJV) — 18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Hebrews 9:12-14 (KJV) — 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?